
Romania's Role in the Black Sea Region

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Romania has arrived internationally, as a full member of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) since 2004, and with anticipated European Union (E.U.) membership in 2007. Domestically, however, there are still many problems to contend with. The most serious threats to Romania's security are economic, and are manifested in crime, corruption, and illicit markets and trafficking. Accordingly, establishing the rule of law and instituting sound fiscal practices have been at the top of the country's political agenda since 1989. The domestic challenges facing Romania are daunting, and demand significant inward-looking attention. But despite this, and the limited resources available, Romania is determined to take on a leadership role in the Black Sea region.

Romania's national security strategy (NSS) emphasizes its desire to be a regional leader in a broad security sense.¹ It recognizes reviving the national economy as a top objective, and rightly lays out a series of actions to address it.² But in a regional context, it describes two additional and very important objectives. The first of these is:

Active participation in actions of international cooperation aimed at fighting terrorism and cross-border organized crime, and second, developing regional relations and cooperation for building up stability and resolving crises.

In addition to these strategic objectives, there are three significant regional priorities that describe specific actions Romania will take:

- Developing cooperation with the countries in the region, including participation in projects of regional, subregional, cross-border and Euro-regional cooperation;
- Strengthening the OSCE's role, as a forum of dialogue in the area of security and developing the capability of preventing conflicts, managing crises and post-conflict rebuilding; and
- Promoting an active policy at a bilateral level or in an international framework in order to ensure the security and stability in South-eastern Europe, as well as in the South Caucasus and the whole area of the Danube and the Black Sea.

Moreover, the national military strategy (NMS) states that Romania will be a key provider of regional stability and a contributor to peace and security in Europe. By continuing current strategic, multilateral and bilateral partnerships and by developing others, Romania intends to create favorable conditions to strengthen security in the region and will facilitate the modernization of its Armed Forces.³

Because of the common concerns and view of the threats in the Black Sea region, it is in the U.S.'s interest to help Romania achieve its goals. This article examines some key questions regarding Romania's role in Black Sea regional security and makes the argument for continued U.S. support through the focused application of security cooperation. Romania has tremendous potential to be not

1 Romanian National Security Strategy, <http://wnglish.manpn.ro/>, February 2006

2 E.g., overcoming poverty and unemployment, streamlining the economy and the financial sector, developing the middle class; ensuring the stability of the banking system, etc.

3 Romanian National Military Strategy, <http://english.manpn.ro/>.

just a force provider but also a regional leader, moving forward in areas of mutual interest with the U.S.

How are Romania's Strategic Interests Manifested in the Region? Assistance and Deployments

Despite its economic and other concerns, Romania pursues an aggressive agenda of regional assistance. Acting independently, Romania has shown a desire to assist its less-capable neighbors in time of need. For example, nearly 500 Uzbek refugees from the 2005 ethnic violence in Andijon, Uzbekistan have been accommodated in Romania. Similarly, Romania came to the aid of Kyrgyzstan, providing more than half a million dollars worth of humanitarian assistance after a January snowstorm killed several people and left many others homeless.

Romania participates in a number of Black Sea regional organizations with a security focus. The South-East Europe Defense Ministerial (SEDM) process, which began in 1996 as a forum for the discussion of regional cooperation issues, established a combined military force in 1998 for peacekeeping and disaster relief operations. Headquartered in

Constanta since 2003, this force, known as the Southeastern Europe Brigade (SEEBRIG), is a seven-nation military organization chartered to assist with stability and security in Southeastern Europe.⁴ SEEBRIG, consisting of about 5000 troops, is comprised of military forces from each partner country,

Romania's Contribution to SEEBRIG:

- SEEBRIG HQ personnel assigned ten units allocated to SEEBRIG.
 - Hq Company
 - Signal Company
 - Mechanized Infantry Battalion
 - Engineer Company
 - Reconnaissance Platoon
 - Elements in CSS Battalion

Romania's Contribution to Operation Enduring Freedom-Afghanistan/ISAF:

- Nearly 500 troops deployed in Kandahar and Kabul
 - Infantry Battalion
 - Afghani National Armed Forces (ANA Training) Detachment
 - 400 troops (Infantry Battalion) deployed to NATO

the highlight being its Engineer Task Force. Importantly, SEEBRIG routinely conducts exercises with North Atlantic Treaty organization (NATO), and has assisted throughout the region with various engineering projects.

In addition to its SEEBRIG role, Romania supports ten United Nations (U.N.) observation missions, including two under the banner of the U.N.'s

multinational Standby Force High Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG) for peacekeeping operations.⁵ Romania has pledged an airmobile infantry company to SHIRBRIG, and most recently, its elements, to include Romanian forces, have been deployed to Ethiopia and Sudan.

Romania also makes significant contributions to the war on terrorism, and specifically to the U.S. and NATO led operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. In Afghanistan, Romanian contributions to the training of the Afghan National Army (ANA) have been important in rebuilding

Romania's Contribution to Operation IRAQI Freedom:

- Nearly 900 troops deployed in Basra, An Nasiriyah, Ad Diwaniyah, and Al Hillah
 - Infantry Battalion
 - Engineer Battalion (-)
 - Intelligence Detachment
 - Military Police Company

4 Alabania, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia, Romania, and Turkey.

5 Sixteen nations (Argentina, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Ireland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden) have signed one or more SHIRBRIG documents, with five more nations (Chile, Czech Republic, Hungary, Jordan, and Senegal) participating as observers.

the nation's military forces. Romanian forces participate in counterterrorist operations and force protection activities. In addition to the U.S.-led Operation Enduring Freedom coalition, Romania also supports the NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Romanian forces assigned to the Operation Iraqi Freedom multinational force routinely conduct force protection and mine clearing activities, as well as reconnaissance and intelligence missions. Reports of Romanian troop performance in Afghanistan and Iraq have been positive. Specifically, Romanian troops have provided outstanding engineering and force protection support in Iraq, and the "can do" attitude of Romanian soldiers has become well known.⁶ Moreover, Romania is interested in taking on a greater role in Balkans security, particularly in Kosovo.⁷

Mentoring in the Region

Romania is looking for ways to cooperate economically with other Black Sea states, particularly in the area of free trade. Romania is a strong proponent of establishing a Southeast Europe Free Trade Zone, and pursues this goal through its leadership of both the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and the Central Europe Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA).⁸

Romania has taken steps to help its neighbors in their efforts to pursue integration with the west. For example, in February 2005, a Romanian delegation met with Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs official to share the lessons learned on European Union accession and the road to NATO membership. According to Romania's Minister of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Mihai Razban:

Georgia's leaders are keenly interested in learning from Romania's own experience of transition, institution building and economic reform.

The above opinion is shared by the Georgian MFA.⁹ All of this points to the potential for Romania to become a key enabling partner, assisting less capable countries in the region.

Participation in Black Sea Regional Organizations

In addition to being a military force provider and a regional mentor, Romania is a key member of, and a leader in, several regional security and economic organizations as detailed in Table 1. The table attempts to capture key aspects of Romania's current role in regional organizations with strategic interests in the Black Sea, and suggests some roles Romania might take to further its own national security interests.

6 Discussions with U.S. Liaison officers embedded in the Polish-led Multinational Division Center south (MND-CS) in Iraq, 2005.

7 Talking points prepared by Mihai-Razvan Ungureanu, Foreign Minister of Romania, "Advancing Romania's E.U. Membership and the Strategic Partnership with the U.S.," The Wilson Center, May 6, 2005.

8 Romania holds both the presidency of CEFTA Joint Committee and the chairmanship of BSEC in 2006.

9 http://www.roembus.org/english/news/international_media/2005/February/14_Feb.htm. "The Romania-led international mission of experts to Georgia, under the aegis of the Community of Democracies," Feb 14-16, 2005

Table 1 Regional Organizations

	NATO	OSEC	BSEC	SECI	SEDM/ SEEBRIG	Stability Pact	CEI
Primary Function	Collective Security	Conflict Resolution	Economic	Regional Stability	Defense Cooperation/ Regional Stability	Conflict Prevention/ Resolution	Political Economic Cultural Cooperation
Romania's Role	Force provider with niche capabilities i.e., engineering, SOF; ISAF contributor, SEEI	Pushing for strengthening OSCE's role in conflict prevention and resolution	Current chairmanship. Pushing for revitalizing BSEC's role in promoting regional free trade	Hosts SECI HQ in Bucharest	Hosts SEEBRIG in Constanta, contributes forces	Hosts meetings, including free trade zone discussions in Bucharest	Chairs 2 of 17 working groups (Minorities, Information and Media)
Implications	Increases prestige as a new member of NATO	Allows Romania to position itself to contribute to conflict resolution in Transdnistria, Caucasus	Increases Romania's market potential	Regional prestige, some control over SECI agenda	Provides significant forces, increases military prestige	Allows Romania to further goal of free trade zone, and contribute to resolution of conflicts in Transdnistria, Caucasus	Significant contributions to regional/ extra-regional forum allows Romania to gain international prestige
Possible Next Steps?	Concentrate more on CS/CSS capabilities to fill NATO's gapped requirements	Chairmanship of OSEC in the near future	Work to establish a free trade zone, similar to CEFTA	Ensure working groups are focused on key issues	Assist less-capable members to develop needed capabilities, e.g., engineering	Ensure working groups are focused on free trade zone, similar to CEFTA	Incorporate the lessons from CEI's economic cooperation into a BSEC free trade area

Within the framework of these organizations, Romania is equally interested in promoting its economic, political, and military agendas in the Black Sea region. Economically, as mentioned earlier, Romania is promoting the idea of a free trade regime in the Black Sea through BSEC, Stability Pact, and the Central European Initiative (CEI).¹⁰ Politically, the prevention and resolution of conflicts is high on the agenda, especially through the OSCE and the Stability Pact. For example, Romanian Foreign Minister Razvan recently indicated Romania would host a summit in 2006 to address the “frozen conflicts” in the Black Sea region.¹¹ Militarily, Romania is a proven force provider of highly effective capabilities that span a variety of mission areas including special forces, force protection, and combat support/combat service support, such as engineering, in the region and beyond.

While it may not be immediately apparent from Table 1, there is a great deal of overlap among the objectives of the organizations listed. For example, NATO and OSCE state that combating terrorism is a key objective. NATO, OSCE, and BSEC all highlight the need to maintain and improve border security and management. NATO, OSCE, and SEDM each promote defense and military reform. The Southeast European Cooperation Initiative (SECI), Stability Pact, and BSEC want to develop and integrate regional disaster response and crisis management capabilities. Because of the overlapping interests, we should expect to see a great deal of collaboration in the form of joint projects taking place. More, however, could be done in the region to facilitate cross-organizational collaboration. Lack of resources and political will tend to be the major impediments to closer contacts. Still, there are a few ongoing, cross-organizational projects that are worth noting.

For example, BSEC and SECI cooperate in the area of countering organized crime and border security; OSCE and BSEC cooperate in the areas of organized crime and illicit trafficking; and OSCE and NATO collaborate in the areas of civilian police training, illicit arms trafficking, maritime security, and consequence management.

Even more important than the overlaps, there are some gaps that no regional organization is currently filling. For example, regional collaboration could be improved to fill the following gaps:

- Border security (coordinated land, air, and maritime surveillance and control);
- Consequence management and regional response capabilities and collaboration;
- Multilateral exercises in disaster response;
- Civil-military cooperation in a multilateral forum;
- Integration of national response systems at the regional level; and
- Sharing of lessons learned from recent deployments.

Where Should the U.S. Focus its Security Cooperation in Romania?

Funding for assistance to Romania will diminish with its accession to NATO and pending membership in the E.U., to include that from the *Support to East European Democracy Act* (SEED) and the Warsaw Initiative Fund (WIF). The U.S. builds partner capacity in Romania primarily through Title 22 Security Assistance, and many capabilities-building programs will still be available. These include, for example, programs that provide training and equipment, such as international military education and training (IMET), foreign military financing (FMF), and excess defense article (EDA) grants. Other key Department of Defense (DoD) programs include the Counterterrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP), Defense Threat Reduction Agency’s International Counter Proliferation Program (ICP), and Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) and Special Operations Command (SOCOM) bilateral exercises. DoD programs that conduct familiarization activities, but do not provide training or

¹⁰ Which will obviously become more complicated once Romania and Bulgaria join the E.U. in 2007.

¹¹ Radio Free Europe, 7 February 2006.

equipment, include the National Guard Bureau's State Partnership Program (SPP) (with Alabama as Romania's partner), and the European Command (EUCOM) Joint Contact Team Program (JCTP). A key Department of State effort is the Export Control and Related Border Security (EXBS) program. All of these programs can be leveraged to promote activities that build Romania's capacity to operate effectively in the region and serve as an enabling partner.

Two important considerations in managing scarce resources are finding ways to sequence and then focus security cooperation (specifically training) activities. As Figure 1 illustrates, familiarization-type activities such as JCTP and SPP are typically phased out over time as the relationship matures. Prior to the provision of training and equipment (through IMET, CTFP, ICP, etc), needs and capabilities assessments should be conducted to set the baseline requirements. Over time, focused training and equipment can be provided to build specific capabilities.

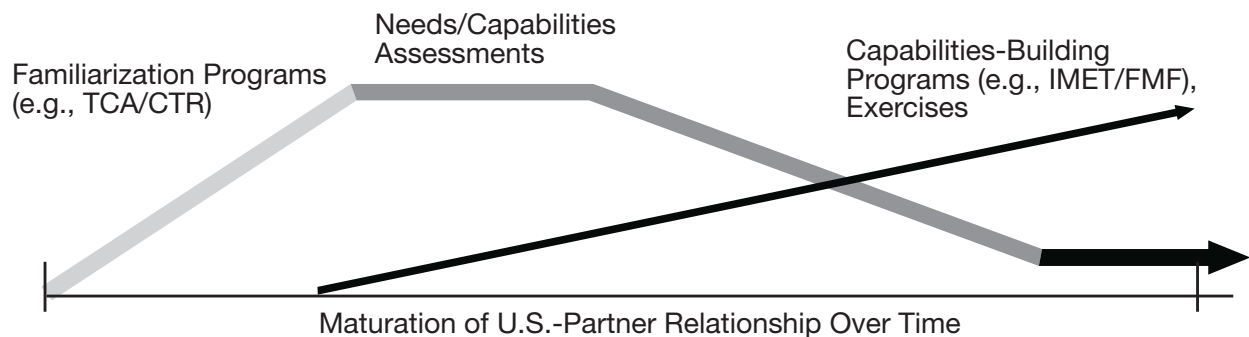


Figure 1. A Security Cooperation Phasing Process

Focusing U.S. security cooperation resources with Romania in areas of mutual interest is particularly important at this time, and requires a bottom-up approach to ensure the regional cooperation framework is not perceived as being imposed from outside. In 2004 EUCOM, in consultation with the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and the Joint Staff, drafted a concept and subsequent plan to implement its Black Sea initiative (BSI) strategy in the region. A key facet of this strategy is regional ownership meaning that BSI is not meant to be U.S. led or executed. The specific components of BSI, which include both military and civilian activities, are to be led by regional partners. Both the U.S. and Romania recognize that there are many security challenges in the region, and those challenges need to be addressed by all states in the region. From Romania's perspective;

... the extended Black Sea region faces too many problems to organize political beauty contests ... Ukraine and other states bordering the Black Sea – Romania too, obviously – are interested in ensuring the security of the Black Sea area. This means an enhancement of cooperation and the interest to, for example, stop organized crime or illegal human or arms or drugs trafficking.¹²

From a U.S. perspective:

The focus of U.S. strategic thinking is that no single state or institution can possibly manage the multitude of Black Sea security issues. U.S. government efforts take into account and encourage the efforts of key regional actors, including littoral states and multilateral institutions such as NATO, the E.U., and the OSCE.¹³

¹² Radio Free Europe, interview with Mihai Razban, 27 August 2005.

¹³ Chargé d'Affairs Thomas Delare, Remarks presented at the conference on "Black Sea Area and Euro-Atlantic Security: Strategic Opportunities," Bucharest, Romania, April 20, 2005.

Given Romania's desire to reach out to less capable countries in the region, the U.S. should encourage enabling partnerships and mentor-like relationships. The focus should be on reform of the security sector, in the context of multinational organizations where it is possible to leverage projects where interests converge. Ad hoc groups are another method, and can be quite effective when common interests are at stake. One good example of this, as mentioned earlier, is the February 2005 new group of Georgia's friends established by Romania, the three Baltic countries, plus Poland and Bulgaria to share lessons on NATO and E.U. accession processes.

Cooperation for cooperation's sake is not enough, and there must be an incentive for other countries to join in. Advancing common goals in a meaningful way requires finding and filling existing gaps in Black Sea security. Developing an integrated disaster response capability, for example, could provide the right kind of motivation for other countries to actively participate in a Romanian-led regional effort. To achieve this goal, an integrated crisis and response capability and strategy could be developed for the Black Sea region. Cooperation in emergency situations is already a reality, but the next step is to develop a capability that would include common operating practices, communications systems, radars, and information and intelligence exchange procedures.

This could be the first component of a broader program of capacity building in the region. Supporting efforts like this, or other collaborative research and joint projects that address shared goals and common threat perceptions is essential to furthering Romania's ability to work with partners in the region. Importantly, the inclusion of interagency officials, military, paramilitary, and civilian agencies, regional non-government organizations and other governmental organizations will ensure greater buy-in and increase the likelihood of lasting results.

Supporting Romania's ability to become an enabling partner also requires providing the necessary tools, for example, fully-functioning regional training centers. In this area, the U.S. could capitalize on Romania's demonstrated strengths, such as its engineering expertise, by establishing a center of excellence for training, or implementing an exchange program with the U.S. engineering training center of excellence at Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri. Similarly, the U.S. could create an exchange program with Special Forces or medical teams. In any case, the end result would be the enhancement of Romania's prestige in what are already some of its core competencies, and a corresponding increase in its credibility throughout the Black Sea region.

Conclusion

Romania has stated clearly and unequivocally that it has the desire to be a leader in the Black Sea region. The question, however, is does Romania have the capacity to do so in all of the areas it has named as priorities? Probably not. The U.S. should encourage Romania in its cross-organizational collaboration efforts to promote regional security and stability. Further, the U.S. should focus its security cooperation efforts to build partner capacity that facilitates Romania's role as a regional enabling partner.

The linked challenges of conflict resolution, security sector reform, economic reform, energy security, improving border security and trafficking of persons and substances far surpass the resources of Romania, or any other single country in the region. Romania knows what it needs from the U.S. The means to further its agenda in the region begins with its increased credibility from its current contributions to the international community, but hinges on the international community's willingness to give Romania a "leg up" by building additional capacity to reach out to its neighbors. The U.S. can, and should, play a key supporting role in this effort.

About the Authors

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cooperation, coalition operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and global defense posture in Europe and Eurasia. Prior to joining RAND, Dr. Moroney worked for DFI Government Services, where she primarily managed regional security projects for the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency. Dr. Moroney previously worked in OSD/NATO Policy where she was responsible for the NATO-Russia/Ukraine portfolios.

Dr. Moroney has published two co-edited books on security issues in the former Soviet Union, which include *Security Dynamics in the Former Soviet Bloc* (with Graeme Herd) (Routledge-Curzon, 2003), and *Ukrainian Foreign and Security Policy: Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives* (with Taras Kuzio) (Praeger, 2002), as well as numerous op. eds., book chapters, journal articles, and policy briefs on Eurasian security and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) enlargement. She was a NATO Fellow from 1999-2001, a short-term scholar at the Kennan Institute in 1999, and a Rotary International scholar from 1997-1998. She has held adjunct teaching positions at The George Washington University and the University of Kent (U.K.) is currently a Research Associate in the Elliott School of International Affairs, The George Washington University. Dr. Moroney is a frequent speaker at academic and policy-oriented conferences in the U.S. and Europe. Dr. Moroney received her Ph.D. in International Relations from the University of Kent at Canterbury, United Kingdom in 2000, MA in European Integration from the University of Limerick, Ireland in 1996, and BA from Frostburg State University, Maryland, U.S.A in 1995.

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